

The President's News Conference With President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya October 6, 2003

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome President Kibaki to the White House. Thank you, sir, for coming.

President Kibaki. Thank you.

President Bush. Today we affirm the growing strategic relationship between the United States and the African Continent. And we continue the longstanding partnership between the United States and Kenya.

President Kibaki's election last December showed Kenyans and Africans and people throughout the world the power of the ballot and the benefits of peaceful, democratic change. The President won a mandate for reform, and he is moving ahead with an ambitious agenda, redrafting Kenya's constitution, liberalizing its economy, fighting corruption, and investing in education and health care. With these steps, Kenya will attract investment, strengthen its role in the world, and improve the lives of its people. Success will take time, and progress may sometimes seem uneven. Yet, the benefits of democracy and freedom and investment in people are certain, and they are lasting.

Today the President and I discussed our alliance in the war on terror. In Nairobi and Mombasa and beyond, terrorists have made Kenya a battleground. The President affirmed the fact that the Kenyan people refuse to live in fear. Kenyan security forces have disrupted terror operations and have arrested suspected terrorists. Earlier this year, I announced a \$100 million counterterrorism initiative to provide east Africa with training, equipment, and assistance to strengthen the security of those nations in east Africa. Kenya is our key partner in this initiative, and its Government clearly has the will to fight terror, and my Government will continue to give them the help they need to do so.

The President and I also discussed efforts to achieve peace in Sudan, an effort

in which Kenya plays the leading role. Two able envoys, General Sumbeiywo and Senator John Danforth, have helped bring Africa's longest running civil war to—very close to a peaceful end. America will stay engaged in this effort.

I appreciate your efforts, Mr. President. Yet, only the north and south can arrive at a just and comprehensive peace, and I urge them to do so quickly.

In Somalia, we will continue to work with Kenya to bring unity and reconciliation to a badly divided land. The establishment of an effective representative government in Somalia will help stabilize the region and dispel the hopelessness that feeds terror.

President Kibaki and I share a deep commitment to waging a broad, effective effort against the AIDS virus, which afflicts nearly 30 million people on the African Continent. In Kenya alone, some one million children have been orphaned due to AIDS. I fully support the President's declaration of total war—his words—on this disease, and I'm proud to stand with him. The United States is Kenya's largest bilateral donor in the fight against AIDS. Our support will grow under my Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which is a firm commitment to spend \$15 billion over 5 years to turning the tide against this disease.

Mr. President, America also stands with you in your work of modernizing the Kenyan economy, rewarding the enterprise of your people. Trade and growth are the only sure ways to lift people and nations out of poverty. I'm committed to keeping America's markets open to African goods and to increasing commercial ties with African nations. Kenya is one of America's most important economic partners in Africa. American investment in Kenya totals more than \$285 million, and trade between our two countries tops \$400 million per year.

These numbers have grown in recent years under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA. And they have the potential to grow even more as reforms in your country take hold, Mr. President. Kenya and the United States are old friends working together to face new challenges. Our relationship is strong, and it's growing stronger, and I'm grateful for the leadership and vision of the President.

Welcome.

President Kibaki. Thank you. It is my pleasure to be here with you, Mr. President.

This morning we had a fruitful meeting with my good friend, President Bush. Our discussions centered on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest to our two nations. I was encouraged by a keen interest and concern that President Bush has shown on issues affecting Kenya and Africa, in particular, the establishment of the Millennium Challenge Account and the 15 billion U.S. dollars' HIV/AIDS program bears testimony to this particular commitment.

We reaffirmed our mutual desire to further deepen our cooperation for the benefit of our two countries. President Bush welcomed the efforts made by Kenya in consolidating democracy, particularly after the successful general elections of December, the year 2002. We share the common desire to promote and entrench democracy in Africa and the need to support Kenya as a model of democracy.

I briefed President Bush on the priorities of my Government; that includes economic revival, education, health, and security. I am pleased by the willingness of the Bush administration to support our efforts to promote and sustain our economic recovery. President Bush shared my concern over the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases, especially in Africa. I briefed the President on the vigorous campaign my Government is conducting against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I am confident that these efforts

are benefiting substantially from the support of the U.S. Government.

We discussed at length the issue of terrorism. Kenya, like United States, has in the past suffered at the hands of terrorism. The attacks have strengthened our resolve to intensify and enhance our cooperation with the United States and the international community in the fight against terrorism.

I have requested the U.S. Government to support Kenya, to strengthen its security as an essential element in the fight against terrorism. This assistance will also enhance Kenya's role as a peacemaker in the Horn of Africa. President Bush expressed his appreciation for the leadership that Kenya has taken in the peace process in Sudan and IGAD. We note with satisfaction the historic signing of an agreement on the 25th of September, 2003, in Naivasha, Kenya, to address the transitional security arrangements for the parties to the conflict.

On Somalia, I emphasized that in order to maintain the democratic gains and to sustain the war against terrorism, it is essential that Somalia stabilizes. In this respect, it is important that the U.S. to— for the U.S. to increase its involvement in the search for peace in Somalia. It is pertinent that all parties involved in the peace process remain engaged. I requested the U.S. Government to assist in this regard, and I thank you very much indeed.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President has kindly agreed to take a couple of questions, and so have I. We'll start with the American side and then alternate back and forth.

First, Associated Press, Terry Hunt, Mr. President.

Israeli Air Strike in Syria/Palestinian Authority Responsibilities

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, do you think that Israel's air strike in Syria was justified? And do you think that you can work with the Palestinian Prime Minister, who says he would not use

force under any circumstances against Palestinian militants?

President Bush. Terry, I talked to Prime Minister Sharon yesterday. I expressed our Nation's condolences at the needless murder of innocent people by the latest suicider. That murder came on a weekend of a high holy holiday.

Secondly, I made it very clear to the Prime Minister, like I have consistently done, that Israel has got a right to defend herself, that Israel must not feel constrained in terms of defending the homeland. However, I said that it's very important that any action Israel take should avoid escalation and creating higher tensions.

The speech I gave June 24, 2002, should explain to the world and to the American people the policy of this Government. We have not changed. Parties need to assume responsibility for their actions. In order for there to be a Palestinian state, the Palestinian Authority must fight terror and must use whatever means is necessary to fight terror. In order for this roadmap, which is a—as a way to get to a peaceful settlement, people have got to assume responsibility. All parties must assume responsibility. The Palestinian Authority must defeat the terrorists who are trying to stop the establishment of a Palestinian state, a peaceful state, in order for there to be peace.

Mr. President, want to call on somebody?

President Kibaki. Well, we hardly have anything to add to that particular statement, because it's fully adequate.

President Bush. You're welcome to call on somebody from your press corps, Mr. President.

April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks], you're not in his press corps. You're trying to play like you're in his press corps. [Laughter]

Q. They put me over here.

President Bush. I know, but this is subversion, and this isn't—[laughter].

Leadership in Kenya

Q. I'd like to ask the President of Kenya a question. My name is Esther Githui; I work for the Voice of America. Mr. President, there has been very good will for you and Kenyans after you took over the Government. But I'm wondering why you have repeatedly asserted that you're in charge of Kenya. Is there any doubt that you are the President of Kenya?

President Kibaki. No, there is no doubt at all. There is no—no one has any doubt, certainly not in Kenya. Look by the way they voted. And look by the way they support the present Government. So I don't see anybody who has any doubt—well, anybody who has any doubt, he can ask us. [Laughter] You know, I mean—[inaudible]—you know, truly.

President Bush. Steve Holland [Reuters].

Iraq Stabilization Group

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. What is the purpose of the Iraq Stabilization Group? And is this an acknowledgment that the effort to stabilize Iraq is flagging? Does it diminish the authority of Secretary Rumsfeld?

President Bush. Yes. You know, it's common for the National Security Council to coordinate efforts, interagency efforts. And Condi Rice, the National Security Adviser, is doing just that. And this group formed within the National Security Council is aimed at the coordination of interagency efforts as well as providing a support group to the Department of Defense and Jerry Bremer. That's the purpose.

And listen, we're making good progress in Iraq. Sometimes it's hard to tell it when you listen to the filter. We're making good progress. I had a—Bernie Kerik came in the other day, and he described to me what it was like to set up a police force in Baghdad right after our successful efforts there. I was really impressed. I was impressed by the—his work. I was impressed by the spirit of the Iraqi citizens desirous to start taking care of business on their own.

And the truth of the matter is, in order for us to succeed in Iraq—and that is to provide the security necessary for a peaceful country to evolve—the Iraqis must take responsibility, and they are. The situation is improving on a daily basis inside Iraq. People are freer. The security situation is getting better. The infrastructure is getting better. The schools are opening. The hospitals are being modernized. And I really appreciate the effort of the Americans who are there and our coalition partners who are there who are working under very difficult circumstances.

Condi's job and Condi's team is going to make sure that the efforts continue to be coordinated so that we continue to make progress.

Mr. President.

President Kibaki. Well, we first of all want to congratulate America for the effort they are making. You know, it is important for all of us to think of the present and the future, because what has passed, has passed. And I think we can gain plenty by focusing on the present.

President Bush. April, are you going to try again to look like you're in the—be careful. [Laughter] Mr. President, call on who you—[laughter].

President Kibaki. Yes, yes.

President Bush. I exposed you. [Laughter]

Q. [Inaudible]

President Bush. That's right. [Laughter]

Kenya-U.S. Relations/African Debt Relief

Q. My name is Martin Mbugua, for the East African Standard, and I have a question for each President.

President Bush. Yes.

President Kibaki. Yes.

Q. Your Excellency, a lot of people see your trip to the United States as yet another begging trip. How different is this trip for those people who are seeing it as another lineup for aid?

And Mr. President, a lot of times people have talked about the debt that saddles a

lot of African countries. You can give a lot of aid, but it's likely to do nothing if the country is sending all the money out. Are you looking to use your influence at the G-8 and the Bretton Woods institution to probably try and ease that, perhaps even forgive the debt for progressive countries?

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kibaki. Well, first for us, I don't think that we are in any way one of those countries which gain nothing or add nothing. But we definitely do gain by talking to friends like America and seeking help. Now, if you are seeking for help, you cannot adequately say publicly whether it is adequate or whether it is not. [Laughter]

So really, if you are asking for help, you really don't ask—you don't say how much. And so, really the question isn't—should not be asked of me.

President Bush. Let me tell you, in many ways, we're the country asking for help. We asked the President in Kenya for help in fighting terror, and the response has been strong. And we appreciate that response. We support HIPC. We'll continue to support HIPC. We also support trade with Kenya.

And the President, in talking about what he would like to see in our relationship, brought up international financial institutions, what can be done with the World Bank and/or the International Monetary Fund. And the President understands, like I understand, that it's the choice of the Kenyans to make. And that's why his anti-corruption policy is so important, because as that policy takes root, as he deals with judges and/or whoever, Government officials that do not honor the integrity of the system, the international financial institutions will take notice and be more likely to become involved with Kenya.

And so we talked a lot about a lot of things, debt, IMF, trade, all aimed at lifting lives and helping Kenya realize her potential. I've long believed that African nations are plenty capable of making the right decisions and managing their own affairs. Our

foreign policy recognizes that, and we will work with governments in particular that have developed the habits necessary for strong democracies and market economies to grow. This is such a leader. So our relationship is a complementary relationship, and it is important that it be strong like it is today.

April, you're really beginning to bother the President. [Laughter]

President Kibaki. No, no. [Laughter]

President Bush. Okay, I am anxious to hear what you've got to say. Go ahead. Let her rip.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Bush. No, not you.

Q. Thank you so much.

President Bush. Yes, April.

Justice Department Investigation of Classified Information Leak

Q. Mr. President, on another issue, the CIA leak-gate. What is your confidence level in the results of the DOJ investigation about any of your staffers not being found guilty or being found guilty? And what do you say to critics of the administration who say that this administration retaliates against naysayers?

President Bush. No, first of all, I'm glad you brought that question up. This is a very serious matter, and our administration takes it seriously. As members of the press corps here know, I have at times complained about leaks of security information, whether the leaks be in the legislative branch or in the executive branch. And I take those leaks very seriously.

And therefore, we will cooperate fully with the Justice Department. I've got all the confidence in the world the Justice Department will do a good, thorough job. And that's exactly what I want them to do, is a good, thorough job. I'd like to know who leaked, and if anybody has got any information inside our Government or outside our Government who leaked, you ought to take it to the Justice Department so we can find out the leaker.

I have told my staff I want full cooperation with the Justice Department. And when they ask for information, we expect the information to be delivered on a timely basis. I expect it to be delivered on a timely basis. I want there to be full participation, because, April, I am most interested in finding out the truth.

And you know, there's a lot of leaking in Washington, DC. It's a town famous for it. And if this helps stop leaks of—this investigation in finding the truth—it will not only hold someone to account who should not have leaked—and this is a serious charge, by the way. We're talking about a criminal action, but also hopefully will help set a clear signal we expect other leaks to stop as well. And so I look forward to finding the truth.

Q. What about retaliation? People are saying that it's retaliation—

President Bush. I don't know who leaked the information, for starters. So it's hard for me to answer that question until I find out the truth. You hear all kinds of rumors. And the best way to clarify the issue is to—full participation with the Justice Department.

These are professionals who are—professional prosecutors who are leading this investigation, and we look forward to—look, I want to know. I want to know, and the best way to do this is for there to be a good, thorough investigation, which apparently is going to happen soon. And all I can tell you is, inside the White House, we've said, "Gather all the information that's requested and get it ready to be analyzed by the Justice Department."

Listen, thank you all very much. Mr. President, I'm glad you're here.

President Kibaki. Very good.

President Bush. Appreciate it.

President Kibaki. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Very good job.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:38 a.m. in the East Room at the

White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Lazarus Sumbeiywo, Kenya's envoy to the Sudan; former Senator John C. Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; L.

Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq; and Bernard B. Kerik, former commissioner, New York City Police Department. A reporter referred to Prime-Minister-designate Ahmed Korei of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya October 6, 2003

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

It is a real honor for us to welcome you. Our two nations are old friends and natural partners. We both emerged from a colonial past to become free nations. We stood together during the cold war, opposing imperial communism. Today, we stand together against the forces of terror and in the defense of human dignity.

We both understand the danger and cost of terrorism. It has brought damage to both our economies and grief to both our nations. With us tonight are two women who suffered terribly on August 7, 1998. Susan Hirsch lost her husband, Abdulrahman Mohamed Abdulla, a Kenyan citizen, in the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. And Susan Bartley lost her husband, Julian, our U.S. Consul General, and her son, Jay, when the terrorists struck our Embassy in Nairobi. Both of you are honored guests here tonight, and we honor as well the memory of your loved ones.

America and Kenya are committed to the war on terror, and we seek a just and

peaceful world beyond the war on terror. Kenya is finding what America has found, that democracy and liberty and free markets are honorable and just and indispensable to real progress. The challenges of freedom are real; yet the benefits of freedom are great and everlasting.

There is a Swahili proverb which says, "Forever persist; a rope can cut stone." Kenya and its leaders have been persistent and courageous in the cause of freedom. You're resolved in the fight against terror. Kenya is an example to all of Africa and a respected partner of America.

For all these reasons, Mr. President, I'm pleased to offer a toast to the enduring friendship between Kenya and the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:36 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. The transcript issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening portion of President Bush's remarks but did include the remarks of President Kibaki.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters October 7, 2003

The President. Thank you all for coming. I met with my Cabinet. We talked about national security matters and economic security matters. We're making good progress

on the economy. Looks like we're growing, and that's important. Last month we—people are finding work, but we're not satisfied with the progress that is being made. We